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c. 1964/01/03

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

3 January 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Attached for your review is a copy of a Draft Memorandum for the President, subject: "Covert Operations Against North Vietnam".

The proposed program was developed by a committee composed of representatives of State, Defense and CIA.

I hope Messrs. Rusk, McCone, Taylor, Bundy and McNamara can meet together on either Monday or Tuesday to discuss the proposed program.

RMN
Robert S. McNamara

cc: Mr. McG. Bundy

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Authority RAC 00011771

By ics, NARA, Date 10-27-97

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

DRAFT MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Covert Operations Against North Vietnam

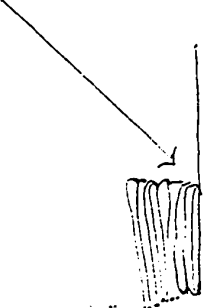
Available evidence indicates that North Vietnam continues to both direct and support the Viet Cong operations against South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese commands are channeled to the Viet Cong units in South Vietnam through an extensive radio network of 114 receiving stations. Infiltration of cadres, weapons, and materials for the manufacture of munitions continues across both the Laotian and Cambodian borders, and appears to have increased during recent months.

To make clear to the North Vietnamese the risk they run in continuing their support of the insurgency effort, you asked on December 21st that an interdepartmental committee develop a plan for covert operations against North Vietnam.

The Committee, composed of representatives of State, Defense, and CIA, acting under the chairmanship of General Krulak, has proposed the following four-month program to begin February 1:

- a. Expansion of intelligence collection operations to include:
 - 1. 19 U-2 photographic missions.
 - 2. 4 aerial communications/electronics intelligence missions.

- b. Expansion of psychological operations.



There is now in progress a limited leaflet and deception program as well as a small subversive radio program of six 15-minute broadcasts per week. These operations will be expanded to provide, during the four-month period, for: 56 leaflet drops, delivery of 18 propaganda kits, 67 harassment and deception operations (phantom resupply, phantom personnel delivery, feints), 120 15-minute black radio broadcasts and 60 white radio broadcasts of from 6 to 12 hours duration each.

- c. Sabotage operations.

During the past 18 months there have been five successful sabotage operations. This program will be intensified by execution, within the four-month period, of about 18 operations as described in Tab A and indicated on the map at Tab B.

Responsibility for the program will be plausibly deniable by the United States, and South Vietnam will be requested to assume responsibility for the entire project. The United States will provide advisory and

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logistical support, but U.S. personnel and forces will not engage in operations within North Vietnam, its territorial waters or its air space. They will continue, as at present, to serve as air crews on certain air reconnaissance missions.

During the four-month period of the program, the progress to date and the operations for the immediate future will be reviewed each week by the 5412 Group, and any changes which appear appropriate will be brought to your attention. Meanwhile, planning will proceed for a further intensification of the program, should that prove desirable.

The proposed program has been designed to help convince the North Vietnamese leadership, in its own self-interest, to desist from its aggressive policies. The importance attached by Hanoi's leaders to the development of the North Vietnam economy suggests that progressive damage to its industrial projects and attrition of its resources might induce a decision to reduce its physical support of the Viet Cong. The selection of sabotage targets was heavily influenced by this fact, and by Hanoi's corresponding strategy of seeking to support the Viet Cong insurgency at little cost to itself and at little risk to its industrial complex, while counting for victory on U.S. and South Vietnamese war weariness and the corrosive effects of time.

Aside from the impact on North Vietnam's economy and morale of a physical destruction program, it is desirable to gain more information regarding the enemy, as well as to intensify the current psychological warfare, deception and resistance operations in order to weaken Hanoi's control of the population and to involve the regime in costly counter-measures.

To assist in evaluating the effects of the program, the Committee called upon the Board of National Estimates for an appraisal of "probable reactions to various courses of action with respect to North Vietnam". The Board stated that:

- a. Communist reactions to most of these operations would be slight.
- b. Communist reactions would be sharper in the cases of operations against Haiphong and the railroads near the borders of China. The reactions would be felt primarily in South Vietnam and Laos, but would not be so extreme as to change the character of hostilities in those countries.
- c. The operations would not be likely to lead to appreciably increased Chinese Communist involvement in the area. Neither would the operations lead the Soviets to believe that the United States had made a significant change in its policies.
- d. The proposed sabotage operations, taken by themselves, even if all were successful, would not convince the DRV leadership that their continued direction and support of insurgent activities in South Vietnam and Laos should cease.

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e. It is possible, however, that the North Vietnamese government might see these operations as representing a significant increase in the vigor of U.S. policy, potentially dangerous to them. If so, they would probably wish to halt the new developments at an early date and would therefore try to arouse international pressures for a conference to settle the problem of Vietnam before it expanded into a more general conflict in the Far East. In such a case the U.S. could probably expect little political support from its major allies.

f. The principal determinant of DRV prosecution of the war will not be damage suffered from such small scale operations, but the course of the war in the South and the degree of risk Hanoi believes will be involved in its prosecution.

The Committee, while more sanguine than the Board, agreed that it was far from clear whether even the successful conduct of the proposed operations would induce Hanoi's leaders to diminish their support of the Viet Cong. However, the Committee concluded that the risks associated with the operations are outweighed by the potential damage to the North Vietnamese economy and morale and, in any case, until more vigorous measures are taken than at present, we will not know whether physical, propaganda, and economic pressures on Hanoi are likely to influence their conduct. The members of the Committee, therefore, recommend your approval of the program outlined above. We concur in that recommendation.

Secretary of State

Secretary of Defense

Director, CIA

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TAB A

~~PHASE I~~

Substage

Physical Destruction Target List

<u>No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Type Action</u>	<u>Desired Effect</u>
1.	Route 12. Important supply route into southern Laos. Direct supply route for Viet Cong.	Small team (5-15 men) infiltrated by parachute to conduct ambush and demolition operations.	Inhibit DRV use of this supply route.
2.	Same as above, repeated each 4 to 6 weeks.		
3.	Vinh Son, Coastal radar station.	Small amphibious team (12 men) transported by fast boat to coastal location; land, destroy radars and withdraw by sea.	Reduce early warning radar capability; attrit DRV resources; exhibit growing GVN offensive capability.
4.*	Four coastal defense guns and small security post.	Small amphibious team (10 men) transported by fast boat; land, destroy coastal defense guns, capture prisoners, and withdraw by sea.	Reduce coastal defense capability; induce DRV troop redeployment.
5.*	LyHoa Bridge	Small amphibious team (4 men) transported by fast boat; land, destroy bridge and withdraw by sea.	Inhibit DRV use of coastal lines of communication.
6.*	Route 1, Important supply route along the coast.	Small amphibious team (10 men) transported by fast boat; land, destroy bridge and withdraw by sea.	Inhibit DRV use of this supply route.

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~~TAB A~~

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<u>Description</u>	<u>Type Action</u>	<u>Desired Effect</u>
7.* Security Post at mouth of Dong Hoi River.	Small amphibious team (12 men) transported by fast boat; land, attack post, capture prisoners and withdraw by sea.	Exhibit growing GVN offensive capability; acquire intelligence.
8.* Route 1, bridges along important coastal supply route.	Small amphibious team (6 men) transported by fast boat; land, destroy two bridges and withdraw by sea.	Inhibit DRV use of coastal lines of communication; create economic difficulties.
9.* Route 1, mining of road.	Small amphibious team (6 men) transported by fast boat; land, mine road and withdraw by sea.	Inhibit DRV use of coastal lines of communication.
10.* Ron Ferry Connecting Route 1.	Small amphibious team (4 Men) transported by fast boat; underwater swimmers place delay action mines and withdraw by sea.	Destroy ferry link of coastal lines of communications; attrit DRV resources.
11.* Haiphong Harbor, the most important ocean shipping port in NVN.	Small amphibious team (6-8 men) transported by fast boat; sink dredges in harbor channels and withdraw by sea.	Close the largest port in NVN to ocean shipping for a long period; create economic problems.
12.** Ile Du Tigre, a small offshore island at the 17th parallel; claimed by the GVN to be part of the demilitarized zone, but occupied by DRV troops.	Short duration amphibious raid (2 marine companies, 1 reconnaissance company) to destroy garrison and capture prisoners.	Acquire useful intelligence; demonstrate GVN capability and resolve to pursue the war and to force adherence to Geneva agreements.

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<u>Description</u>	<u>Type Action</u>	<u>Desired Effect</u>
13. ✕ Ben Thuy fuel storage depot. 2nd largest petroleum stock in NVN, where 20-25% of NVN reserves are stored.	Small amphibious team (4-6 men) transported by fast boat; land, attack fuel farm with incendiaries and withdraw by sea.	Create a grave economic problem by destruction of costly fuel reserves.
14. Dong Hoi Airfield.	Small amphibious team (6 men) transported by fast boat; land, emplace incendiary rockets and withdraw by sea.	Destroy fuel storage and aircraft; create added military security problems; attrit resources.
15. ✕ Lang Son-Hanoi R.R. from China to Hanoi.	Long term operations by small (10 men) team infiltrated by air drop deep in NVN to conduct hit-and-run attacks against this railway link between Hanoi and Communist China.	Inhibit DRV use of this supply line from the China border; create economic problems; increase security requirements.
16. ✕ Yen Bay-Lao Kay R.R. from China to Hanoi.	Long term operations by small (5 men) infiltrated by air drop deep in NVN to conduct hit-and-run attacks against this railway link between Hanoi and Communist China.	Inhibit DRV use of this supply line from the China border, create economic problems; increase security requirements.

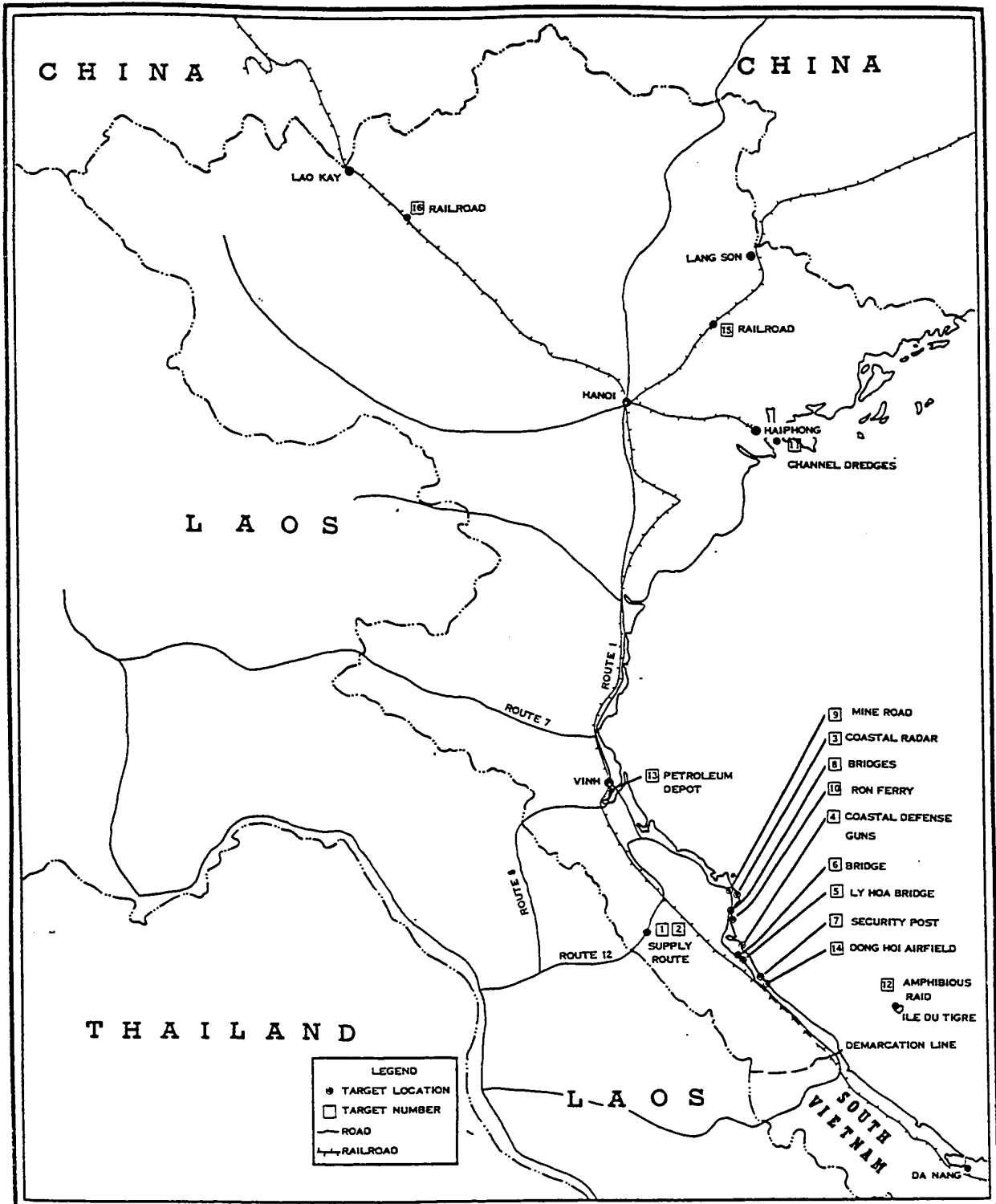
NOTES:

- * Indicates targets from the CIA target list which previously have been approved for strike.
- ** State Department representative does not concur in this target. It is his view that this operation, unlike all others in the recommended target list, is overt and undeniable, and to carry out this operation would be to change the "rules" in the conduct of the war in South Vietnam. This would involve risks of retaliation and adverse international reactions. Further he considers it questionable how much positive value could be achieved by this operation.

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